

I must therefore controvert the second sentence of your editorial note. It should, I submit, be modified to read that 'at the peak of any eclipse less than total the darkness is no greater than on some of the heaviest overcast monsoon days.' If at the place of observation the eclipse is total, the circumstances are wholly different. Your foot note, I may add, even in this modified form, would be relevant to the Note to which it was appended, since that solar eclipse was not total at the place of observation (or, indeed, at any other place).

SCOTT CHRISTIAN COLLEGE,
NAGERCOIL,
TRAVANCORE,
INDIA,
October 17, 1956.

G. H. MARSDEN,
M.A. (Cantab.)
Principal.

18. JUMPING SNAKES

'Mr. D. E. Reuben's note in your issue for April 1956 and his query regarding the ability of snakes to jump reminds me that last year I raised the same question in a letter to *Country Life*.

I was moved to write the letter by an article that appeared in that journal about poisonous snakes in which the author remarked on the agility (not amounting to jumping) of *Echis carinata*. I may say that the following incident, which I described in my letter, elicited several replies all of which seemed to indicate that such action by a snake was beyond the experience of the writers.

On an autumn evening in, I think, 1930, I was dressing for dinner in my quarters at the Delhi Gymkhana Club when my bearer, a most observant and reliable man, suddenly shouted to me from the verandah, "Sahib, jumping snake!" On going out to investigate he pointed to a small snake, tightly coiled in the manner of a viper, on a charpoy on the verandah. He said that when he arrived on the verandah the snake, which was lying on the mat outside the door, had suddenly projected itself, "in one", from the mat on to the charpoy, a horizontal distance of some 8 feet, with a rise of 18 inches.

There was an electric light over the charpoy and to ensure the despatch of the snake before it could escape into the surrounding darkness I shot it with a 12-bore gun, somewhat to the discomfiture of the newar of the charpoy.

On submitting the mangled remains next day to that well-known authority, the late J. C. Roberts, I was informed that they were those of an *Echis carinata*.

Admittedly I did not witness the incident myself, but I have no reason to doubt my bearer's testimony, nor does it seem impossible that the muscular power of a coiled snake should enable it to project itself through the air for a short distance, especially as it would have an excellent "take-off" from the rough door-mat.'

6, ARTILLERY MANSIONS,
WESTMINSTER,
LONDON, S.W.-1,
August 28, 1956.

H. A. N. MEDD

19. A PYTHON'S MEAL



The above photo was taken by U Maung Gale, Divisional Forest Officer, Shwebo, on 20th August 1955; shortly after the Python had swallowed a small thamin in Kyaikthin Wild Life Sanctuary.

25, INYAMYAING ROAD,
UNIVERSITY P.O.,
RANGOON,
April 12 1956.

TUN YIN,
B.C.S., (Retd.)

20. DHAMAN OR RAT SNAKE (*PTYAS MUCOSUS*)
DRINKING MILK

As it is often stated that no snakes drink milk, the following may be worth recording. This happened at Kheri in the U.P. during the monsoon in 1923 :

The milk-drinking Dhaman used to come from the scrub jungle near the bungalow, where we would have waiting for it a saucer of milk near our chairs in front of the verandah. The scrub jungle was quite 20 yards away. Regularly in the evening we would place the

saucer of milk in the same place and regularly the Dhaman would emerge from the scrub and come along and drink the milk. While it approached us, my friend and I had to remain motionless and silent, not even attempting to turn our heads or move a hand. But our eyes were free to watch our guest who after emptying the saucer, returned as silently and gracefully as he came. It was a delightful entertainment.

We had trained the Dhaman to come closer and closer, first by placing the saucer on the edge of the scrub, then nearer and nearer to the bungalow, eventually close to where our chairs would be put in front of the verandah.

HAPPY VALLEY,
MANDERSTON P.O.,
NATAL, S. AFRICA,
August 20, 1956.

J. E. C. TURNER,
I.F.S., (Retd.)

21. STRANGE ACCIDENT TO A FROG (*RANA BREVICEPS* SCHNEID.)

On 15th July 1956 in the cistern outside Cave 3 at the Kanheri Caves, Salsette, Bombay, I saw a foam-nest of *Rhacophorus maculatus* stuck in the angle of two vertical rock walls, a few inches above water. A large frog was seen with his head inserted into the bottom of the nest. On attempting to pick him off, the top of his snout was found to be so firmly attached to the nest, that the whole mass had to be pulled off together. The frog was an adult male of *Rana breviceps*, in an extremely weak condition. He had apparently poked his nose into the nest in an attempt to climb the wall and would no doubt have died in this curious position. The stomach was empty and the guts contained remains of vegetable matter.

MESSRS. FAIZ & Co.,
75, ABDUL REHMAN STREET,
BOMBAY-3,
October 29, 1956.

HUMAYUN ABDULALI

22. THE SPAWNING OF CARPS

I have only now read Dr. Goldschmidt's letter together with Dr. Kulkarni's reply published on page 634 of the December 1954 issue of the *Journal*.

Although this correspondence specifically refers to *Labeo rohita* a similar question has been arousing my curiosity for some time. I refer to the spawning of *Barbus tor khudree* in the Periyar River above the Lake.

The SW. Monsoon rains at the end of May certainly induce these fish to move up the river from the lake, and spawning takes place between July and August. The river is also in flood at the beginning of the NE. Monsoon in October and early November. During November and early December I have taken large numbers of both